

Iraqi Media Watch: February 7, 2006

Current Translations from the Iraqi Press

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Al-Iraqiyya

In an interview with former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, he downplayed the controversy around the idea to establish a council made of the leaders of the winning lists in the recent elections.

Television, although it represents to a large degree the government position, is sometimes highly critical of it. One of the most awful reported scenes was coverage of the al-Husayniyya, an outskirt of Baghdad. For the last three years, the place has been like New Orleans after Katrina hit. Children and adults alike are going back and forth through filthy water which covers even some of the front yards of homes. If reconstruction continues in this shape, democracy in Iraq will be as good as it was in New Orleans, as far as people's satisfaction is concerned. This is not an isolated case. It is almost the norm. I suggest that a group of our guys in Washington go to the city of Samawa to see what the Japanese are doing without TV cameras or long speeches. TV continues to run its coverage of the rituals in the shrine cities and other major Shi'a towns in commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn. Security measures in these places are at the level they were during the election days.

Al-Rafidayn

This paper ran an article citing a poll which revealed that "most Iraqis (76%) believe that the Americans will not withdraw even if an Iraqi government asked them to." The article also stated that Iraqis (80%) believe that even if the Americans withdraw, they will continue to have military bases in Iraq. The good news is that 67 percent of those polled think that Iraq is going in the right direction.

Az-Zaman

This paper reports that the selection of a Prime Minister in Iraq will be made easier because the UIA decided to compensate the parties of losing candidates (within UIA) with important ministries.

The paper also reports that Moqtada al-Sadr promised to “defend Iran and Syria against any attack.” Everyday, Moqtada acts like those 14th century warlords. The only difference is that Moqtada has only hot air to sell.

This paper also reported an attack on a Danish checkpoint in Qurnah (northern Basra). This is most likely an attack related to the cartoons subject of wide Muslim displeasure these days.

Al-Sabah

Al-Sabah quoted an official in the Ministry of Defense as saying that Ramadi and Falluja are among the quiet areas now. Not according to the Iraqi TV, which reported that the head of the city council in Falluja was assassinated yesterday.

It also reports that the Iraqi Judiciary issued two warrants to arrest Mash'an al-Jubouri and his son. You remember from yesterday's newsletter that al-Jubouri was accused of financing terrorism in Iraq from public money he illegally took from some funds he had access to.

The stand-off is still on concerning the Basra Airport. The Minister of Transportation says, according to the paper, that the airport will open only when British forces leave the airport and Iraqis take charge. The British should be smarter than abusing the Iraqi Minister of Transportation, especially because he is an associate of Moqtada al-Sadr. Treating Iraqi officials as puppets is not going to work all the time.

Al-Sabah al-Jadid

This paper quoted an official in the Ministry of Electricity saying that the lack of service is primarily due to the bad weather and terrorism.

Al-'Adalah

The distribution of ministries will be next Sunday, according to the UIA member, Mahmud Shaykh Radhi. He also said that the UIA delayed announcing its choice until next Saturday. These delays are done to please one group in the UIA, the Virtue Party, whose leader Nadim al-Jabiri wants to be the PM no matter what. In an interview with the Iraqi TV today he said that he is not interested in becoming a minister because his program for Iraq can only be achieved by the PM.

Al-Mada

This paper quoted the British Ambassador as saying that the dialogue with the insurgents continues.

Al-Mu'tamar

The paper reports that the Ministry of education is planning to update all school textbooks. “The new textbooks will focus on the educational materials and will not contain any partisan political messages. Instead, they will focus on human rights, rejecting violence, the protection of the rights of all Iraqis and they will focus on the concept of citizenship,” the Minister of Education, Falah al-Sudani, said.

The Saddam regime grossly abused the education of Iraqi students by injecting its own politics in every aspect of education from history and geography to math, English and economics. It is about time Iraqi kids have good and objective textbooks.

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